

Industries in Mercer and Lawrence Counties Focused on Meeting Workforce Needs When Recession Ends

“Industry Needs You” Outreach Campaign Designed to Change Image of Manufacturing, Attract Future Employees, and Encourage Skills Training

NEW CASTLE, PA – November 30, 2009 – At a time when unemployment in the manufacturing sector of Lawrence and Mercer Counties is in the double digits, area manufacturers are reaching out to high school students, parents, school guidance counselors and others to encourage interest in manufacturing careers. “Industry Needs You” is the message being communicated via a new Web site, IndustryNeedsYou.com, and supported by presentations, videos, advertising, posters and other public relations tools. The campaign is a workforce development project of the Industry Partnership of Lawrence and Mercer Counties, by the West Central Job Partnership of the Workforce Investment Board.

“We want to change the perception that manufacturing is a dirty, dead-end job,” notes Eric Karmecy, Assistant Director of Workforce Development of West Central Job Partnership. “Modern manufacturing offers good pay and benefits and many options for career advancement. The goal of the Industry Needs You campaign is to get that message out to young people, their parents, guidance counselors, and others, and encourage them to take advantage of the many training opportunities available locally.”

"Our facilities are modern and our employees are cross-trained to handle a variety of tasks--which keeps the work interesting and rewarding," says Pamela Vass, Vice President of Human Resources at The Ellwood Group. "We take advantage of long-term skills-based training programs to help our employees acquire new skills and to advance."

The Industry Needs You outreach campaign is designed to drive traffic to the Web site, www.IndustryNeedsYou.com. There visitors will find lists of area manufacturers, training providers, and testimonials from people who work in manufacturing.

“If we don’t encourage young people to consider a manufacturing career now, and get the skills training, when this recession ends Lawrence and Mercer Counties will experience a severe workforce shortage,” adds Dale Deist, President of Deist Industries in Hadley. Deist and other representatives of the metals manufacturing industry have been making presentations to school boards in Mercer County to call attention to the need for skills training.

Many area manufacturing executives began in entry level positions, took advantage of employer-sponsored educational opportunities, and today either own or oversee the plant operations. For example, the CEO of XALOY in New Castle, Ron Auletta, began in the plant and worked his way up. Jay Martin, COO of IPEC in New Castle, took a similar career path. “Manufacturing got me started with a good paying job, the company supported my continuing education, and today I have input into the entire operation.”

The Web site includes links to area manufacturers’ Web sites, where job openings are posted, as well as local and regional training programs from such providers as Precision Manufacturing Institute in Sharon, the Mercer County Career Center in Coolspring Township, and the Lawrence County Career and Technical Center in New Castle. In addition, virtual plant tour videos are posted for Roll Forming Corporation in Sharon and Technical Precision, Inc. in Hadley.

“We designed this site to be a one-stop source of information for students, parents, educators and anyone else who needs to know more about manufacturing in Lawrence and Mercer Counties and how to obtain the training needed for these good-paying jobs,” concluded Karmecy.

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